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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR PM/WRA: KATHERINE BAKER

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SUBJECT: FEW U.S.-MANUFACTURED LAND MINES IN ECUADOR

REF: SECSTATE 200879

¶1. In response to Reftel, Poloff September 20 contacted Guillermo Leal, chief of the OAS Humanitarian Demining (HD) mission in Ecuador. Leal noted the only U.S.-produced land mine found in Ecuador was the M18A1 Claymore device. The GoE had destroyed seven in-stock Claymores in 2001, Leal recalled; he believed the Ecuadorian Army maintained at least ten more in its warehouses. They were not subject to destruction under Ecuador's Ottawa Convention responsibilities, since the weapons were to be fired manually by GoE soldiers, not left unattended, to be triggered by the enemy.

¶2. Since the OAS HD program's inception three years ago, sappers had uncovered no/no U.S.-produced land mines. For comparison, the total of mines cleared in Ecuador, including those uncovered in the Army's own efforts in the late 1990s, was 4438. Most were of Chilean, Brazilian, or former Soviet Union fabrication. According to the Army's own minefield documentation, however, there are 39 pressure-triggered Claymores remaining in Ecuador's remote Morona-Santiago province, where HD operations soon will commence.

KENNEY